

VZCZCXRO3540
OO RUEHDBU RUEHPW RUEHSL
DE RUEHBUL #3473 3021427
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 291427Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2664
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 003473

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2019

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: WARDAK GOVERNOR FEDAI CRITICIZES ON ELECTION RUNOFF

Classified By: IPA Coordinator Scott F. Kilner for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On 25 October Wardak Governor Fedai expressed his concerns to Task Force (TF) Spartan about the upcoming election runoff. He believes the international community made a "very big mistake" by pressing President Karzai for a second round. According to Fedai, the public image of President Karzai, surrounded by non-Afghans during the October 21 announcement, is being used by the Taliban and others in their negative information operations against GIRoA. Governor Fedai's opinions were also mirrored by many other Afghans throughout the rest of Wardak province during separate Coalition civ-mil engagements. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During a 25 October meeting in Mayden Shahr, Wardak Governor Fedai strongly criticized the process that has led to a second round of elections. He said that the international community made "a very big mistake" by pressing for a second round and that he predicts "a darkness after the election." He also related that he has received a "strong" communication from the Taliban discouraging participation in the second round. The Governor said that the Taliban was exploiting the fact that President Karzai was surrounded at the press conference by non-Afghans, as if he were "in hand cuffs" and forced to speak as the "aggressors" forced him to speak. The Governor criticized the fact that there was not a meaningful Afghan dimension to the announcement of the second round and that the international community "did not respect public opinion."

¶3. (C) Governor Fedai also made a number of post-election predictions. The first is that the turnout would be so low that a Loya Jirga would have to be called to settle the "national emergency." The second is that the outcome would lead to a "civil war" between the north and the south. A third possibility would be a weak coalition government that would only embolden the insurgency.

¶4. (C) Governor Fedai considers the international community too idealistic, and he places the blame for poor policies on poor advisors in Washington who do not know the country. He criticized people who come for a week or a month and then think they "know" Afghanistan. This was especially true, in his opinion, of the IEC. He advised "if you want to defeat your Afghan enemies you have to do it the Afghan way."

¶5. (C) Likewise, Coalition civilian-military leadership in Wardak heard similar opinions in their separate engagements with the population at large. Numerous Wardakians feel that the international community unnecessarily pressured President Karzai to make it appear that the system works. Others, who said they voted, commented that their vote might not have been counted due to international scrutiny. The resignation of the Afghan representative to the ECC fed this impression. In the end, Wardak residents believe President Karzai, "will win and we'll have wasted time and money, or he'll lose and the government will likely fall apart because the international community is closing down Pashtu polling sites."

¶6. (C) Comment: While Fedai is a strong supporter of President Karzai, he is also a measured politician. He is not known for expressing such opinions without having given them prior thought and consideration. That said, Fedai also recognizes and appreciates the value of the international community to Afghanistan, and to Wardak in particular. Regardless of how the runoff elections turn out, Governor Fedai will continue to be an ally of the Coalition and a positive force in the province. End Comment.

¶7. (U) This message was drafted by Task Force Spartan.
EIKENBERRY